

VZCZCXYZ0002
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBE #0164 1201747
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 301747Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY BELMOPAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1806

UNCLAS BELMOPAN 000164

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/IP/ITA, D, P, M, CA, S/CT, INR, AND WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [KFLU](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AMGT](#) [AMGT](#) [BH](#)

SUBJECT: BELIZE: EAC PREPARATION AND STATUS UPDATE FOR H1N1 FLU -
TWO MEETINGS

¶1. Summary: The EAC convened on April 28 to review the information known about the H1N1 flu virus outbreak, and to review post's Tripwires for Pandemic Flu. The EAC decided to restrict travel of American personnel and their families to neighboring Mexico and Guatemala until further notice as a precaution. The EAC agreed to meet daily. A Town Hall meeting was called to inform all mission employees and family members about the medical facts of the flu and the embassy's response and preparedness. On April 29, four virus samples were sent from Belize to CAREC for testing. Additional samples will be sent today. End summary.

¶2. On April 29 four samples (two from Belize City, one from Orange Walk, one from San Pedro) were sent to the Caribbean Research and Epidemiology Centre (CAREC) in Trinidad for testing of the type A or B flu virus (a finding of type B would eliminate the possibility of H1N1 virus). The results should be back later today to the regional medical coordinator in Belize, Dr. Paul Edwards, Epidemiologist. If the test reveals the virus is type A, they will test for seasonal flu virus. If seasonal flu viruses are then eliminated, they will send the sample to CDC to determine the virus type. The lab also has several samples ready to be sent to CAREC today, April 30.

¶3. On April 28 in response to the H1N1 flu outbreak in Mexico, the EAC met to review the tripwires for Pandemic Flu and determine what actions by the EAC were appropriate at this stage. Because Belize borders Mexico, the tripwires state that post must regard the Mexican outbreak as if it were an outbreak in Belize. The EAC discussed, and agreed to impose, a restriction on all American personnel and their family members on travel to Mexico, and also to Guatemala, as it borders both Belize and Mexico. Families at post make frequent trips to Mexico to shop.

¶4. The EAC further determined that daily EAC meetings were necessary to monitor developments closely, share information among agencies, and review the mission's posture on travel, public services, and preparedness.

¶5. By direction of the EAC, hand sanitizer solution was locally procured and will be distributed to all consular personnel and to the local guards manning the principal entrances to the consular area and the Chancery. Gloves will also be provided to the guards at the consular entrance and to consular personnel.

¶6. The Military Liaison Office (MLO) reported that they had 1000 Personal Protection Equipment kits en route to post. The Consular Section issued a Warden message in accordance with guidance from CA.

The EAC ordered a test of the all-mission cascade system the evening of April 29. GSO double checked the emergency supplies stored on the housing compound. The embassy supply of diesel fuel was just replenished and is at maximum capacity. A small supply of Tamiflu has been pre-positioned on the housing compound as Belize has a three-day weekend, May 1-3.

¶7. At the second EAC meeting, April 29, it was decided to quarantine an FSO scheduled to return this weekend from vacation in Mexico. As a precaution he will be told to stay at home on the

housing compound and supplied with Tamiflu and masks until the incubation period is over. The Peace Corps Director reported that his PCVs have been told not to travel to Mexico or Guatemala. He also underscored the importance of Whereabouts Reporting. Peace Corps has its own supply of Tamiflu stockpiled.

18. A Town Hall meeting of all mission personnel and family members was held on April 29. The Embassy's Locally Employed nurse presented the medical facts about H1N1 flu, its symptoms and treatment. She also instructed everyone on personal hygiene practices that can reduce one's chance of contagion. The Embassy is well supplied with Tamiflu, masks and gloves. Everyone was advised to stock up on food and other emergency supplies in the event that the EAC calls for a sheltering-in-place response.

DIFFILY